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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8234  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1341  
RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 6773  
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 0887  
RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 9116  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 000817

SIPDIS

FOR AF/S WILLS, JAMES AND MARBURG  
FOR DRL WILLET AND GILBRIDE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [SF](#)  
SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA VOTES: SITUATION REPORT #3

PRETORIA 00000817 001.2 OF 002

¶1. (U) Summary: National and provincial election results began trickling in on April 23. Early numbers show that the African National Congress (ANC) will again receive a huge mandate from the electorate, but there are signs of strength from the Democratic Alliance (DA) in Western Cape. The Congress of the People (COPE) also posted some positive numbers, but so far they have not been as high as the party anticipated. Despite complaints from DA leader Helen Zille and ANC spokesperson Jesse Duarte that some polling stations ran out of ballot papers and ballot boxes, most election observers (and parties) say the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) ran a relatively smooth day of voting. The IEC's final tally from this election may not be completed until late on April 24 or early on April 25. End Summary.

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Results Come In  
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¶2. (U) The IEC's Results Centre in Pretoria began tabulating results for the national and provincial election on April 23. Results posted at 08:00 in South Africa, with only 20 percent of the total number of votes counted, show the ANC with 63 percent of the vote, the DA with 19 percent and COPE with 7 percent. A COPE spokesperson at the Results Centre told reporters "it was never COPE's idea that it would become the official opposition." Smaller opposition parties lagged behind. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) stood at 2.7 percent, the Independent Democrats at 1.7 percent, and the Freedom Front Plus at 1.2 percent. Zille told a crowd at the Results Centre that she is pleased with her party's performance. The DA was leading the closely watched race in the Western Cape with 53 percent of the vote against the ANC's 26.8 percent. (Note: Some polls say the DA could win more than 45 percent of the vote in Western Cape, putting the party in position to take over governing the province. End Note.)

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Some Complaints, Some Posturing  
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¶3. (U) DA leader Zille complained vocally about reports that some voting stations ran out of ballot boxes and ballot papers. She told reporters, "South Africans should not become used to the idea that they cannot vote because of the IEC's organization problems." Duarte said late on April 22

that the ANC saw it as a "crisis" that the IEC was reported to have run out of ballot boxes and ballot papers in some areas. Although many of the U.S. Mission's election observers did hear complaints about long lines on the day of the vote and heard from poll workers about box shortages and ballot papers running out, the IEC responded to many of the problems quickly and professionally. (Note: There was some speculation among political analysts and pundits that parties complained about how the IEC handled some issues in an effort to cast blame should they perform poorly at the polls. End Note.)

14. (U) However, by early on April 23, the ANC was saying that "South Africans should not beat themselves up over what was a largely successful election." ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe told a small crowd at the Results Centre that there was "only one problem" he knew of during the vote yesterday. Zille noted that "apathetic voters" were responsible for lower than expected numbers. The ANC later responsible for lower than expected numbers. The ANC later joined the chorus of election observers from the African Union and the Southern African Development Community in saying that South Africa sets an exemplary standard for elections.

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Comment  
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15. (U) The Embassy's election observation activities crisscrossed all nine provinces to provide us with first hand impressions of how the IEC administered polling day activities and how South Africa's came out in the millions to cast their votes. No electoral system is perfect, so it was only to be expected that glitches and unanticipated problems

PRETORIA 00000817 002.2 OF 002

would occur. Based on our in-house effort alone, we do not believe that any set of unanticipated problems in the administration of this massive exercise had a fundamentally negative impact on the overall trend and results of this election. The preliminary election results, though far from final, already reveal the broad outlines of the emerging final picture. The ANC will win big but could still fall short of 66 percent. The DA will remain the official opposition in Parliament as well as prevail with the most votes in the Western Cape. COPE's performance may disappoint its members, but their supportive votes may be causally associated with the ANC's loss of its super-majority due to alienated life-long members of the ANC shifting their votes to COPE. Zuma's Zulu heritage and his campaign towards the Zulu nation will strip significant support away from the IFP, improving the ANC's performance in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Election counting will continue throughout the day, with tabulation occurring perhaps faster than initially expected. Post will have officers at the IEC's Results Centre throughout the afternoon into the evening and will update the results as they become available.

LA LIME